

Weather Effects on Arizona Agriculture in 2005

With Arizona's diverse topography, the State's temperatures range from the wintertime cold in the higher mountain areas to the searing summertime heat of the desert areas. Arizona's wide spectrum of climate and terrain support a remarkable agricultural diversity. Virtually all crops in Arizona are irrigated, meaning yield variability is less influenced by rainfall here than in the rain-dependent agricultural states. Weather conditions are still important to crop farmers in making planting and harvesting decisions. The highest recorded temperature in 2005 was 120 degrees at Parker on July 13 and 22. Flagstaff recorded the lowest temperature of 4 degrees below zero on January 7.

January: Alfalfa condition was fair to good. Range and pasture conditions ranged from fair to good and then began to improve throughout the month. Livestock were in fair condition, stock water was adequate, soil moisture was short, and insect damage was virtually nonexistent to light. Temperatures were above normal for the month ranging from a high of 82 degrees to a low of -4 degrees. There was rainfall throughout the month leaving all the reporting stations above normal.

February: During the second week of February small grain (barley and durum wheat) planting was virtually complete. Alfalfa, range and pasture remained the same as January. Temperatures continued to stay below normal with a high of 74 degrees and a low of 7 degrees. Precipitation fell all month leaving totals above normal.

March: Rain continued to fall throughout March keeping totals above normal all over the state. Temperatures stayed below normal for March. Temperatures ranged from a high of 91 degrees to a low of 4 degrees. Alfalfa, range and pasture continued the same as the previous months. Cotton planting began the third week of March.

April: Precipitation was still above normal at all of the reporting stations. Temperatures were above average ranging from a high of 97 degrees to a low of 18 degrees. Some rangeland was in the best condition in many years. Cotton planting was over half finished by the third week of the month.

May: Alfalfa, range and pasture conditions remained the same as the previous month. Small grain (barley and durum wheat) harvest began the third week and virtually all acreage had headed. Temperatures were above normal ranging from 114 to 24 degrees. Rain tapered off for most of the month, but fell the last week to keep all the reporting stations with above normal totals.

June: Cotton planting was completed by week one. Cotton bolls started to set the final week of June. Crop conditions remained the same as previous months. Range and pasture land started to deteriorate in June from less rain fall. Temperatures were above normal for the month with a high of 117 degrees and a low of 30 degrees.

July: Small grain (barley and durum wheat) harvest was virtually completed by week two. Cotton squaring was finished by the end of the month. Temperatures were above normal ranging from the high this year of 120 to 32 degrees. Range and pasture condition continued to worsen from lack of rain.

August: August brought much needed rain to Arizona. Alfalfa was in mostly good shape. Range and pasture conditions improved over the month to the mostly fair range. Cotton bolls finished setting around the fourth week of August. Temperatures were mostly below normal for the month. Temperatures ranged from 115 to 42 degrees.

September: Rainfall continued throughout the month. Cotton condition was mostly good. Yuma began harvesting cotton around the third week. The percent of acreage with open bolls was behind the 5-year average. Temperatures were mostly above normal for the month. Temperatures ranged from 117 to 29 degrees.

October: October brought mostly above normal temperatures with a high of 107 degrees and a low of 25 degrees. Heavy rains fell toward the end of the month. Alfalfa and cotton conditions stayed mostly good. Range and pasture conditions started to deteriorate from lack of rain. Cotton harvest was 45 percent complete by month's end, but behind last year.

November: Temperatures started to get cooler with a high of 93 degrees and a low of 14 degrees. Little rain fell during the month. Cotton harvest was at 77 percent complete by the end of the month. Range and pasture conditions were mostly poor to fair for the month.

December: Traces of rain were seen throughout the month. Alfalfa, range and pasture conditions stayed nearly the same as they had throughout the year. By the end of the month, cotton harvest was near completion. Temperatures were below normal for this time of year, with a high of 81 degrees and a low of 0 degrees.